

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-12

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DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00

EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01 STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01

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SUBJECT: EC SOCIAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL, DEC 18: NUMEROUS OUTSTANDING
ISSUES WRAPPED UP

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE FINAL EC COUNCIL OF THE YEAR, A MEETING OF
SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTERS, WAS DISTINGUISHED BY PROGRESS ON A
NUMBER OF OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY ISSUES. THE MINISTERS GAVE FINAL
APPROVAL TO THE EC'S 1976 BUDGET; APPROVED 1976 IMPORT QUOTAS FOR
PRODUCTS FROM THE STATE-TRADING COUNTRIES; AND AUTHORIZED THE
EXTENSION FOR SIX MONTHS OF THE EXEMPTION TO THE EC'S BEEF
BAN GRANTED TO IMPORTS FROM SWAZILAND, BOTSWANA AND LESOTHO.
IN THE SOCIAL FIELD, THE MINISTERS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO A
DIRECTIVE PROVIDING FOR EQUAL TREATMENT OF MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS
WITH REGARD TO ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, PROMOTION AND PROFESSIONAL
TRAINING AS WELL AS WORKING CONDITIONS. IN ADDITION, THE MINISTERS
AGREED TO THE EXTENSION OF BENEFITS GRANTED UNDER THE SOCIAL FUND

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TO THE CLOTHING SECTOR AND PROLONGATION COVERING THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY.

END SUMMARY.

2. THE EC MINISTERS FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS HAD A FIELD DAY AT THEIR COUNCIL MEETING IN BRUSSELS ON DEC 18 CLEARING OFF A NUMBER OF END-OF-THE-YEAR ITEMS.

3. 1976 COMMUNITY BUDGET: WITHOUT DISCUSSION, THE MINSTERS GAVE FINAL FORMAL APPROVAL TO THE EC'S 1976 BUDGET AS RETURNED TO THE COUNCIL BY THE PARLIAMENT. (SEE EC BRUSSELS 10931 AND PREVIOUS.) THE COUNCIL AGREED TO INCREASE "NON-OBLIGATORY" EXPENDITURES BY 102.9 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT (MUA), THUS AVOIDING AN IMPASSE WHICH COULD HAVE MADE THE EC DEPENDENT ON "GOING-RATE" FINANCING. THE GERMAN DELEGATION, WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY INSISTED THAT THE PARLIAMENT COULD NOT INCREASE THE 1976 BUDGET BY MORE THAN 90 MUA, REPORTEDLY GAVE IN TO THE NEW FIGURE "WITH GRACE" AT THE LAST MEETING OF THE EC COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES (COREPER) CLEARING THE WAY FOR FINAL ACTION BY THE COUNCIL.

4. IMPORT QUOTAS FROM STATE-TRADING COUNTRIES: WITHOUT DISCUSSION THE COUNCIL APPROVED NEW AND INCREASED QUOTAS FOR IMPORTS FORM THE STATE-TRADING COUNTRIES. (SEE EC BRUSSELS A-482.)

5. ACP BEEF: THE FRENCH DROPPED THEIR OBJECTIONS AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT GAVE ITS FAVORABLE OPINION, THEREBY PERMITTING THE COUNCIL TO APPROVE, WITHOUT DISCUSSION, A SIX-MONTH EXTENSION TO THE EXEMPTION TO THE EC'S BEEF IMPORT BAN FOR PRODUCTS COMING FROM BOTSWANA, SWAZILAND AND LESOTHO. (SEE EC BRUSSELS 11051.)

6. EQUAL TREATMENT FOR MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS: THE COUNCIL AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO A DIRECTIVE CALLING FOR THE EQUAL TREATMENT OF MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS WITH REGARD TO ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, PROMOTION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, AS WELL AS TO CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT. UNDER THIS DIRECTIVE, WHICH IS TO TAKE EFFECT WITHIN 30 MONTHS, THE MEMBER STATES ARE TO PASS LEGISLATION MAKING IT AN OFFENSE FOR EMPLOYERS TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST EMPLOYEES ON THE GROUNDS OF SEX.

7. UNION RIGHTS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS: THE MINISTERS ADOPTED A DIRECTIVE PERMITTING MIGRANT WORKERS FROM ONE MEMBER STATE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SEEK OR HOLD OFFICE IN UNIONS IN THE COUNTRY IN WHICH THEY ARE EMPLOYED.

8. SOCIAL WELFARE PAYMENTS FOR DIVIDED FAMILIES: BECAUSE OF FRENCH OBJECTIONS, THE MINISTERS WERE UNABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE HARMONIZATION OF REGULATIONS DEALING WITH SOCIAL WELFARE PAYMENTS MADE IN CASES WHERE WORKERS AND FAMILIES LIVE IN DIFFERENT EC MEMBER STATES. THE COMMISSION HAD PROPOSED THAT ALL

MEMBER STATES AGREE TO MAKE PAYMENTS AT THE LEVEL AWARDED IN THE COUNTRY OF THE WORKER'S EMPLOYMENT. FRANCE MAKES THESE PAYMENTS AT THE LEVEL APPROPRIATE TO THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF THE FAMILY. THE QUESTION OF HARMONIZING THESE PAYMENTS HAS BEEN REFERRED BACK TO COREPER, FOR FURTHER STUDY.

9. SOCIAL FUND: THE MINISTERS AGREED TO EXTEND THE BENEFITS GRANTED UNDER ARTICLE FOUR OF THE EC'S SOCIAL FUND TO THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY AND AGREED TO PROLONG FOR 18 MONTHS SOCIAL FUND ASSISTANCE TO THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY. THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO AGREE, HOWEVER, ON OPENING UP THE SOCIAL FUND TO OTHER SECTORS PARTICULARLY HARD HIT BY THE RECESSION. OUR SOURCES INDICATE THIS WAS DUE TO A DISAGREEMENT AS TO WHAT SPECIFIC SECTORS SHOULD BE ADDED AND TO THE GENERAL FEELING THAT, GIVEN ITS LIMITED BUDGET, OPENING UP THE SOCIAL FUND TO NEW INDUSTRIES WOULD NOT SERVE TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF ITS ASSISTANCE EFFORTS.

10. MIGRANT WORKER ACTION PROGRAM: THE MINISTERS APPROVED A RESOLUTION CALLING UPON THE MEMBER STATES TO TAKE ACTION TO BETTER THE LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS FROM OTHER EC COUNTRIES WITHIN THEIR BORDERS. THESE INCLUDE GRANTING EQUAL ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT SERVICES; FAMILY RECEPTION SERVICES TO THE ADJUSTMENT INTO THE NEW COUNTRY; AND ASSISTING THOSE MIGRANTS WHO DECIDE TO RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN.

11. SCHOOLING FOR MIGRANT WORKERS' CHILDREN: THE MINISTERS HAD AN INITIAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE PROBLEM OF PROVIDING ADEQUATE SCHOOLING FOR THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS, BUT NO DECISIONS WERE TAKEN. THE MATTER HAS BEEN REFERRED TO COREPER AND TO THE COMMISSION FOR FURTHER STUDY.

12. STATISTICS ON FOREIGN WORKERS: THE COUNCIL APPROVED A REGULATION REQUIRING THE MEMBER STATES TO COMPILE AND FORWARD TO THE COMMISSION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON AN ANNUAL BASIS STATISTICS ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN WORKERS, BOTH FROM OTHER MEMBER STATES AND FROM OUTSIDE THE EC. GREENWALD

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